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## The Rouen Post, June-July 1943

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# THE ROUEN POST

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A PAPER DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF ROUEN POST No. 242

WILLIAM STACK

Editor

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## THE MAY PARTY

"Dr. Edwin C. Ernst, nationally known St. Louisan, will entertain Rouen Post 242, American Legion, and all who saw service with Base Hospital 21, at his country place on Schultz Road, Village of Oakland, Saturday afternoon and evening May 29. The guest list threatened to tax capacity until word leaked out that Artist William (Wild Swing) Stack, the ex-pugilist, will serve as chef. That did it — many lads phoning cancellations because they say they remember Willie's cooking in France back in 1918."

—from "Round the Town with Regan"  
St. Louis Star-Times

The foregoing libelous comment by an envious local columnist, apparently served only to swell the attendance at the annual May party which was unanimously acclaimed as one of the best of a long line of successful re-unions. The menu consisting of spaghetti, barbecued pig ribs, slaw, doughnuts and coffee, brought lavish praise from such veteran epicures as Jim Costen, Wrennie Steele, Dick Sabath and Earl Hursey and all agreed that your Editor did credit to the tall white cap loaned to him by the head chef of the Park Plaza Hotel.

A guest of unusual interest was Capt. Joseph A. Laffler, dental officer, on sick leave from North Africa where he served with the Army's Twenty-first General Hospital. "North Africa was not at all as we expected to find it," reported Capt. Laffler. "We were looking for deserts but it proved muddy and mountainous. When we arrived, our group lived in tents three weeks, and the doctors and dentists had to help in unloading our hospital equipment from ships for transfer to trains that took it to our permanent headquarters."

"We finally were situated back in the mountains in a group of stucco hotel buildings. The staff had plenty to do as the hospital was caring for more wounded than it had been designed to accommodate."

Captain Laffler said the hospital's Officers Club had become active and is sponsoring a sort of victory garden of its own. "There's quite a food shortage in Africa, particularly in meats," he said. "Our club invested in a flock of chickens and a vegetable plot. We hired some Arabs to take care of things and though they worked very well we had to keep a close watch on them. Their ideas of sanitation are not quite what ours are." The climate in North Africa is something like certain parts of Texas and the St. Louis contingent has been in good health since its arrival from England, one month after the Allied invasion, Capt. Laffler said.

However the climate failed to agree with him and he was sent back home, arriving at an Army hospital in Texas the latter part of May.

Pat Byrns, Dave Millar, Jim Costen and Judge Neely grew reminiscent as the evening wore on and their vocal renditions of old favorite numbers inspired Dr. Ernst's dogs to join in doleful accompaniment.

Marvin Hamilton, long recognized as the super-gourmand of Rouen Post, bowed out of the picture after watching George Jordan consume ribs. "For years I felt that I could compete with anyone at a dining table," said Ham. "But my hat is off to Jordan. At the evening meal I easily held my own but when he came back at midnight to dispose of four slabs of ribs, I admitted defeat. I watched with mingled awe and horror as he



## THE ROUEN POST

sat on a barrel, gnawing bones, with Doc Ernst's giant shepherd dog drooling in front of him. It was like a scene from the stone age."

Jordan took his victory lightly. "After all," he said, "Ham was never a main event performer. He's a noisy eater — not a great one. And as for his comment on my capacity for ribs I felt that I was entitled to plenty. I contributed more meat points than anyone else."

"Silent" Forney Dixon has been mentioned in dispatches for his untiring efforts behind the bar. Forney went on duty at 2 P. M. and rendered splendid service until midnight. "I would have been through at 11 o'clock," commented Forney. "But it took an hour to get rid of Engel and Jablonsky."

If you should feel the urge to sign your name to an old felt hat, which already bears the signatures of many veterans of the Rouen sector, notify its owner Marvin Hamilton at 215 N. 1th street, St. Louis, Mo. Ham will be glad to mail it to you for your autograph.

Ernest McIlvaine and Willard McQuoid wobbled in with the early arrivals. McIlvaine, who has been working in Illinois and Kansas defense plants, is now on the payroll of the Curtiss-Wright Corporation in St. Louis. . . Irl Trickey stayed on to the close. The old "Swamp Angel of the Cape" has deserted his native bogs to work as a guard in a Granite City steel mill.

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We lunched with Joe Lennon and Holland Chalfant at the Jefferson Hotel a few weeks ago. Eating at the same table with these rugged characters no longer presents the hazard it did in 1917-18. Time has adjusted them to the amenities observed by fastidious diners and it is now possible to reach for an extra bun or the last pat of butter in their presence without being jabbed by a fork. Lennon telephoned our office one morning last week. "I have an important message," the burly one announced. "Your cousin Irl Trickey just paid me a visit and asked that I send you his love."

Pat Byrns, venerable Red Cross secretary, has been making his rounds on crutches as the result of a knee injury suffered in an automobile accident in June. "Old Folks" Harold Jolley is of the opinion that Byrns should continue the use of crutches after his knee mends. "They've improved his carriage and lent him more agility than he's displayed in years," declared Harold . . . Jim Barnard of the A. T. & T. Co., is still talking about the appalling number of sandbags he carried as a member of the State Guard during the May floods.

Miss Margaret Conochie, former Base Hospital 21 nurse, has received a letter from her nephew, Captain William C. Conochie, Inspector of Catering in the Canadian Army overseas. Captain Conochie, who enlisted in the Canadian Army as a private two years ago, is stationed in England, where he was aide-de-camp to a general for 6 months. Before joining the army he was the owner of a bakery in Galt, Ontario. At Miss Conochie's request, Marvin Hamilton has mailed a supply of Edgeworth tobacco to the Captain who is not overly fond of the brands available in Blighty.

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Foot-weary pedestrians plodding along Grand avenue in the 300 block are invariably attracted by an assortment of plaster models, showing various types of foot deformities, on display in the windows of Chiropodist Frank Depke's new office near the old Schubert Theatre. The former marmalade king recently moved west after a fifteen year stay in the downtown district. His latest title is Scientific Chairman, Fellows Pedic Research Society.



# THE ROUEN POST

## SOMEWHERE IN AFRICA

by ERMA FROHBIETER, 2nd Lieut., A. N. C.



LIEUT. FROHBIETER

Feb. 25, 1943 — It is raining and I can't do much else, so writing a letter gives me an excuse to park in the comfortable writing room — which is a balcony around the patients' mess, where just now the patients are having a hot bingo game under the auspices of the Red Cross.

I feel that I must do penance. I have just stolen a board. That is really a major offense here, where there is no wood, but on the way home from the bath house with my roommate, a few minutes ago, I saw a piece of wood just the right size for an ironing board lying at the edge of the G. I. lumber pile. Night had fallen, so I picked it up and between my cape and my roommate's cape, we made off with it. As the G. I. laundry does not iron our uniforms, we either iron them or wear them unironed — and now that I have a board, I'll iron mine. Up to this time I've been using my neighbor's board (she probably got hers the way I got mine) but have only ironed my caps.

The beans, hash, Vienna sausages, chili beans, hash, fruit, pancakes, hard biscuits, Vienna sausages, and hash are getting better all the time. We never even think of steak any more, honestly we don't. The way it is now everything tastes alike and we don't have to worry about flavor or seasoning. We have had pork chops twice and chicken twice since we arrived and occasionally we get pie. However, I for one, am not suffering on our diet. I am just as fat as ever. Many of the girls have gained weight but some of the male officers have lost a lot; the sissies can't take it.

The red flannels suggested by Dr. Krebs would have been a great help. I have practically worn out a sweatshirt. Somehow we haven't been able to get used to the cold here, though the temperature isn't so low, for bougainvillia and geraniums are blooming out of doors. It's just that we have unheated rooms, I suppose, and there is no wood, except the doors, in the buildings. Floors are tile, stairs marble (a local product), stair railings iron, washstand tops and bedside table tops marble, and beds iron. Nothing could possibly be so cold as those tile floors at 6 A.M., especially when I miss my little grass mat and step on the floor in getting out of bed. Also the water in our living quarters is cold. Everything is icy to the touch; probably that is why we feel the cold so. It has been raining for the past ten days, but in fair weather, when the sun is out, it is quite hot. Then at sundown it is cold again. Someone said that this is a cold land under a hot sun and I think that about describes it. A few mornings ago I saw a little snow sprinkled on a nearby mountain ridge but it didn't last long.

Yet in spite of the climate this is a beautifully colored country: I can't understand how a place so devoid of vegetation can be so pretty. The earth and rocks take on different hues and the sky is always gorgeous.

We have learned something about stockings during the past few months. At home we were very careful in washing our silks and nylons. But since leaving the United States, and especially while living in Tent City, we washed our hose in helmets, using cold water after taking a bath in the water, never rinsed them, used whatever toilet soap we could get, hung them in the sun and wind — and we've gotten more wear out of those hose than we got at home. So phooey on special soap flakes and careful drying indoors! Here the water is so hard it leaves streaks on colored clothes and gives our hands the appearance of having been dipped in flour — but it doesn't hurt the hose.



# THE ROUEN POST

We are very, very busy just now; what an influx of patients we have had in the last ten days! We are expanding as fast as possible. Other buildings are being opened as fast as they can be cleaned, replumbed and set up. Also have tents and huts. We are a general outfit and get most of our patients from other hospitals after their immediate needs are cared for but recently lots of them are coming direct. The patients are all so glad to get here; they think it is heaven after being in the smaller hospitals set up in tents. The latter are doing wonderful work with only the barest necessities. Here the patients have sheets — which some haven't seen for a year — they get hot baths, good food and are away from bombings

I work on the medical service and most of our patients are ambulatory. They help us a lot with our work. We are in the Annex and there is no heat except in our nurses' office where a little pot-bellied field stove is kept going day and night. It takes the chill off the place but we wear our sweaters constantly. We are getting our hospital supplies now and no longer make our own charts and books. That was really something. One day a week we wear our gas masks for a short time while on duty.

## FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Owing to our practice of featuring meetings of a purely social nature in this paper it may be that out-of-town readers have gained the impression that the activities of Rouen Post No. 242, American Legion, are based solely on the pursuit of food and drink. As evidence to the contrary we present the minutes of the June meeting which are typical of the routine monthly sessions. From time to time the programs present guest speakers, the most recent having been a veteran colonel of the Army Medical Corps and an agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. It is only at the Armistice and May anniversary parties that business is suspended for the evening.

### MINUTES OF ROUEN POST MEETING — No. 242

JUNE 15, 1943.

It was reported that Mrs. Proctor (Dolly Belle Schmidt) who was a patient at Barnes Hospital, has now returned to her home at Sullivan, Missouri.

Minutes of April 15 meeting were accepted as read. A letter was read concerning two books published by the American Legion, one entitled "Fall In" to be presented to boys entering the service and another entitled "At Home" to be presented to families of men in service. It was regularly moved and seconded that we purchase 100 copies of each.

A letter was read from Lulu Bender Wimmer who is a patient at Hines Hospital, Hines, Illinois.

The next order of business was the appointment of a Nominating Committee by Commander Ernst as follows:

CHAS. JABLONSKY, Chairman

BILL STACK MARVIN HAMILTON BILL ENGEL

Dr. Ernst said he was unable to report on the proceeds of the "One arm bandit" at the May party but would do so at the next meeting.

It was regularly moved and seconded that Jablonsky again be the delegate to the District Convention as well as the State Convention, Jordan to be the alternate.

Report of May 29 annual outing which was held at Dr. Ernst's place.

A motion was made by Hamilton and seconded by Stack commending Stack for great culinary display at Dr. Ernst's party.

It was moved by Jablonsky and seconded by Jordan that a vote of thanks be given to Mrs. Ernst for her generous contribution of time and material toward our annual May party.

Commander Ernst next appointed the following committee to revise our constitution and by-laws:

BILL ENGEL, Chairman

CHARLES JABLONSKY JOE LENNON GEORGE JORDAN

There was considerable discussion regarding display of Unit 21's War Trophies. A Committee to work on details consisting of Stack as Chairman with Conrath, Proetz, Hamilton was approved on motion by Jablonsky, seconded by Jordan.

Jordan had nothing to report on Americanism activities.

A report by Kimbrel of Child Welfare Council described May meeting of Council.

It was voted that No. 242 donate \$2.00 towards defraying incidental expenses for this activity. Motion made by Kimbrel and seconded by Jablonsky.

Jablonsky made a general report on the activities of the Service Officers Council.

Mortuary Chairman had nothing of particular importance to report.

Next meeting will be held Monday evening, July 12.

Ritchey Williams reported for the Membership Committee and disclosed that we are in first place in our class and that we were issued a citation. Drive ends June 30th. We should get three or four new members to be safe. It was regularly moved and seconded that the meeting be adjourned.

Respectfully submitted, W. E. ENGEL, Adjutant